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BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
JAPAN SOCIETY OF AMERICA

**JAPAN'S MESSAGE TO AMERICA
AND AMERICA'S REPLY**

BY

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“The object of this Society shall be to collect and publish information on subjects relating to the Empire of Japan; to foster and encourage a cordial relationship between the peoples of America and of Japan; to cultivate and spread a knowledge of the arts and industries of Japan, together with its language, history, folklore and customs; and to these ends to hold exhibitions from time to time; to invite lecturers and to convene meetings for informal discussions.”—*Constitution*.

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JAPAN'S MESSAGE TO AMERICA AND AMERICA'S REPLY

*Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same
are sons of Abraham.* Galatians 3; 7.

How good an American dare you be? To what extent dare you own your Americanism, live up to your Americanism, and embody your principles in your practices? How good an American dare you be?

But before you answer, What is an American? You cannot, of course, say, "one who is born on American soil." History, tradition, constitution, and law would all contradict you. With a large hospitality, this nation tells the people of Europe and of many other parts of the world that after a residence here of only five years and after passing the most elementary examination they may become Americans, entitled to all the rights which go with American citizenship and all the splendor of the name. The American who is born an American may be less an American than the one who is not. Americanism is of the spirit. You may be a Native Son of the Golden West or a Native Daughter or a Colonial Dame or a Son of the Revolution a hundred times over and then, if you are narrow, reactionary, unsympathetic, with no passion for freedom in your

soul and no love of humankind, you are no good American. While he is an American, wheresoever born, who has an American heart, who loves liberty, cherishes the principles upon which this Republic is built, will live and if need be die in the determination that government of the people, for the people, by the people shall not perish off this earth.

Now, how good an American dare you be?

But wait! For I want you to see that the teaching of America about Americanism is the teaching of the New Testament about things spiritual and eternal. And listen to this text: *Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham.* You know what is the pride of the Jew in his own descent. Sons of Abraham—it is magnificent! In the eye of the Jew there is no such lineage in the entire story of man's troubled life upon this planet. Sons of Abraham—you cannot deepen nor heighten the romance and grandeur of this. But the word of Scripture is that the true children of Abraham are not they who are linked on with him in a chain of flesh and blood but they who share the spirit that was in him.

And it is not only Paul who speaks in this way. John Baptist, the typical reformer, threatening an axe laid at the root of trees which had stood for centuries, thunders to the pick and flower of Jewish aristocracy: "*Think not to say within yourselves 'We have Abraham to our father,' for I say unto*

you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" as though one should say to men and women who pride themselves upon their Americanism and are destitute of the American spirit: "I say unto you that God is able of Asiatics and Africans to raise up better Americans than you."

Shall I quote to you One infinitely, quite infinitely, higher than John Baptist and that great-hearted Paul? Listen to the words of our Lord: "*I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.*" I dare add nothing to these unsurpassable words except to remind you of the vision of Zwinglius of "that future assembly of all the saintly, the heroic, the faithful, and the virtuous," wherein, as he believed, "Abel and Enoch, Noah and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, should meet with Socrates, Aristides, and Antigonus, with Hercules, with Theseus, and the Catos, in the home where every good man who has ever lived will be present with his God."

So now,—How good an American dare you be? Indeed, but I would ask,—How good a Christian dare you be? To what extent are you ready to square your deeds with your words?

I am driven to ask these questions after reading a volume entitled: "Japan to America," a volume

recently published. Though it contains thirty-five distinct "messages" to the American people, these make up one single "Message." It is written by the leading men of Japan. Great names are here. The influential leaders of thought in Japan address themselves to the people of this Republic. Statesmen, diplomats, bankers, merchants, editors, educators, publicists of various kinds, led by Count Okuma himself, the Grand Old Man of Japan, speak to you. They are entitled to a hearing. They are entitled to a reply.

This "Message" reveals:

1. *An intimate knowledge, in itself most remarkable, of American history and American literature and of the American spirit.*

It would be interesting to give many illustrations. One or two must serve. There is, for instance, the statement of Viscount Kaneko, who has held great positions in official and diplomatic circles, who has received the degree of Doctor of Laws from Harvard—the highest degree which an American university can bestow upon one whom it delights to honor. Viscount Kaneko says that in his boyhood he read the life of Alexander Hamilton, and that since boyhood the words spoken to young Hamilton by his mother when she lay dying have been his constant guide. Before I quote them I put it to you: How many of you are familiar with the life-story of Alexander Hamilton, the friend of Washington, the real maker and builder of our Federal Constitution? How many

of you know what Hamilton's mother on her death-bed said to the future statesman? These words have been to the Japanese statesman his "constant guide," and he says that he wishes to see them adopted by young Japan: "My son, never aim at the second best. It is not worthy of you. Your powers are in harmony with the everlasting principle of the universe."

How many different biographies of Abraham Lincoln are there on your shelves? Answer quickly,—Which amongst them are your favorites? There are six biographies of Lincoln in Japanese. Anecdotes of George Washington are inserted in the text-books of the elementary schools. A Japanese editor who writes one of the chapters in this volume says that the eloquence of Webster and of Patrick Henry is a fact as familiar to Japanese men and women as the loyalty of their own General Nogi. The autobiography of Benjamin Franklin is used in many schools as a text-book of English.

And so the story goes. What may even appeal to you is the anti-climax—though it will not seem so to many of you—that "Among our boys your Wagner, Cobb, McGraw, Mathewson, have won an admiration bordering on worship." The baseball hero becomes an apostle of cosmopolitanism!

2. *Abounding gratitude for the friendship of America.*

Here is a great fact made manifest. The gratitude

is full; it is coercive. It is no soft sentimentality; it is strong and sane. It is grounded in the knowledge of what the United States has been to Japan through fifty years of history. It is not an exaggeration to say that the feeling of some of the best men in Japan toward America is that of a younger brother to an elder brother, respected, admired, loved.

3. *Ridicule of the scare-mongers.*

You ought to familiarise yourself with those parts of the "Message" which express the astonishment of Japanese thinkers in presence of the foolish scare-talk of some Americans. I suppose that a person of British blood would not be allowed to live in this country if he suggested doubts concerning the American sense of humor. Yet it is permitted to a person like myself to wonder what peculiarity of American humor it is which leads Americans to put their sense of humor in a strong-box and forget all about it! Can you not see that this scare-talk makes us ridiculous? If the Japanese does not laugh at us it is not because his sense of humor is undeveloped; it is because of his native courtesy! The head of one of the great shipping lines of Japan remarks simply: "There are some Americans who often publicly speak of the possibility of a Japanese-American war. Such nonsense is never entertained in Japan. I hear that in America the ship-builders, to get orders for battleships, fabricate falsehoods and cause a great deal of talk and discussion as to America's need of

more battleships to prepare for war with Japan. I do not know the truth of this." The President of the Nippon Yusen Kaisha knows things about America that Americans ought to know!

4. *Protestation of pain caused by the policy of pin pricks.*

Aggression there has been none on the part of the United States. Violence there has been none. But the policy of pin pricks has been adopted, if not by the United States, at least by our own state of California. In the last two sessions of the Legislature not fewer than fifty-one anti-Japanese Bills were introduced. The one that carried, the Alien Land Act, was by no means the worst of those introduced; indeed, it was mild compared with many of them. Anti-Japanese legislation of one sort or another has been proposed year by year for the last ten years, and the speeches made are, if possible, worse than the measures proposed.

5. *Recognition of danger in this.*

Let there be no mistake as to the language employed by these distinguished Japanese writers nor as to the spirit which actuates them. There is nothing here in the nature of a threat, nothing remotely resembling a threat. There is no wild talk. There is a grave, serious, and even humiliated recognition of the fact that this sort of thing is provocative, that human nature being what it is, and Japanese human nature being what it is, a policy of insult, which

seems to be deliberately conceived in the spirit of insult for the purpose of insult, is dangerous to everybody concerned. I do not desire to insist upon this in trying to reproduce the essential parts of the Japanese "Message" lest you should mistake my views for the views of Japanese writers. I will return to it in a moment.

6. *An earnest desire for good understanding and permanent friendship.*

Like the gratitude already discussed, this desire is sincere and deep. Japan desires nothing more sincerely than she desires the continuance of friendship and the deepening of friendship with America. Her interests point in this direction. Her sympathies, admirations, hopes, all compel her to deplore the suggestion of strained relations between the two countries, all lead her to this expression of what is nothing less than a longing for friendship between the Empire of Japan and the United States of America, happy for both, honorable to both, tending to the peace and progress of our western world.

What reply must America give?

I beg you to weigh well your answer. This matter is too important for you to pass it by lightly. It is world-great in its issues. Does any human being between the Pacific and the Atlantic desire to precipitate a conflict between the United States and Japan? Does any American, not an actual maniac

for war, desire to see the United States enter into the world-conflict which is now raging? There is a microbe of war in the air. The nations have been infected. Fever is high. Delirium has set in. War has become epidemic. Can you contemplate without horror the thought of estrangement in this evil hour, the estrangement of the United States and Japan, with all the hideous consequences which would follow? I was careful not to put this too plainly when quoting to you the recognition of danger made manifest by the "Message." But now for myself I declare that this is one of the most important questions before the mind of the whole world to-day, and it may be that those who come after us will see that it is absolutely the most important for the future of mankind. A spark cast by a madman has set Europe ablaze. Is there an American so mad as to risk setting fire to the rest of the world?

In what mood shall we answer this "Message"?

Not, certainly, in the spirit of a reply made by one of our own San Francisco newspapers to a pamphlet issued last year by Dr. Soyeda, "A Survey of the Japanese Question in California." The Hon. Juichi Soyeda is a scholar and a master of affairs. He has the degree of Doctor of Laws. He was trained at Cambridge and at Heidelberg. He has been president of great banking institutions. He distinguished himself in the Japanese scheme of monetary reform. A little more than a year ago, during the excited dis-

cussion of the Japanese question in California, he came to this city credentialed by the Associated Chambers of Commerce in Japan. He wrote the "Survey" and published it. I have it here; but you can see for yourself that it is impossible for me to read to you these fourteen pages of carefully reasoned argument and appeal. I can only tell you that it is written in faultless English. It is my business to use words, and I should be quite satisfied if at the end of my life I knew that I had never used English words less effectively in writing or in speech. Well, here is the comment upon it in one of our papers:

"It is with thankfulness, gratitude, humility and a deep sense of being properly rebuked that we receive this fulmination of the Hon. Juichi. We shall not selfishly enjoy this feast of reason and flow of language alone. At least half of it shall be fed to the office cat—may his venerable whiskers flourish for ever! The other moiety will be forwarded to a noted pro-Japanese American statesman, who engages in lecturing, breeding doves, and Secretarying of State with equal grace, facility and financial success. In a general way, Honorable Pamphlet informs us that Honorable Japanese is truly morally superior to unfortunate American inhabitableness, being truth, firmness, uprightness and faithfulness in gentlemen's agreement, therefore is perfectly agreeable to naturalisation and intermarriage, which afford happy solution to Honorable Immigration Question not yet impacted upon yellow American press."

What do you think of that? Will you try to imagine some man of distinction in our own country, famous in scholarship, famous in finance, famous in public service, honored for his integrity, for his ability, for his achievements, sent, let us say, to Germany—before the war—with a message of good will, accredited, if that were possible, by all the Chambers of Commerce of the United States, writing in faultless German and in excellent spirit “A Survey of the American Question in Germany”? What should you say if a newspaper in Berlin or Hamburg received it with these brutal comments? What should you say about German Barbarians? What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander! If you would think it despicable on the part of a German newspaper, what is it when a journal of our own does it? I have no hesitation in answering some of my own questions. The man who offers so wanton and unprovoked an insult to a distinguished visitor, who, out of no cause in the world except the badness of his own disposition, recklessly stirs up bad blood between two nations like the United States and Japan, does deeper dishonor to America than they did who fifty years ago fired on the flag.

If we are to make to this “Message” a reply worthy of ourselves, the first practical thing to do is to free ourselves from bondage to illusion; and to begin with, from bondage to what I may without

offence call the California scare.

For what are the facts? All the land owned by Japanese in California in 1909 (when the state investigation was made) amounted to less than 11,000 acres, and all the land leased to less than 110,000 acres—in all about 120,000 acres in the hands of Japanese. This in a state which is one-third bigger than England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales together; in a state which has 28,000,000 acres, of which 12,000,000 acres are already under cultivation! All the land owned and leased by Japanese in California, it has been said, could be put amongst the Miller & Lux ranches and lost in the shuffle.

In all California there are not more than 42,000 Japanese men, women, and children. Between 1909 and 1912 the departures of Japanese from California have outnumbered the arrivals by nearly 7,000.

When you reduce the "Japanese Question" to its proper proportions, when you cease to exaggerate it and make a bogie of it, how does it look to you? Are you not a little ashamed of the scare?

Then there is the national illusion. It was the Kaiser who, twenty years ago, invented the phrase: "The Yellow Peril." The Kaiser's phrase was quickly amplified by British writers into: "The threatening swarms of the yellow races." In Europe we were asked to picture some 900,000,000 of Asiatics—there or thereabouts, a few hundreds of millions more or less made little difference in our imagina-

tion—we were asked to picture these “swarming” over Europe. I suppose they would first have “swarmed” over America! There is one fundamental fallacy—if a scare of this kind deserves to be regarded as a fallacy and seriously reasoned about. The scare to possess any scaring quality has to assume that Asia can and would unite. Asia unite! Unite Turkey and Italy, unite Germany and France, unite Europe today—that is an easy task compared with the work of some Asiatic statesman who is going to “unite Asia!”

Not less ludicrous is the idea that Japan could transport that threatened army of a million men which we shall wake up some fine morning to find landed upon our shores! It took Great Britain nine months to transport 200,000 men with their horses and equipment to South Africa. It required 351 outward voyages. Calculations made by American naval authorities curiously reproduce these figures. They find that they would need 19 transports of over 5,000 tons burden to transport over-seas 12,500 men with necessary equipment. This works out at 152 transports for 100,000 men—nearly one-half of the 351 employed by Great Britain to transport 200,000. For the million men which are to be hurled upon American shores—“hurled” is the correct word, I believe—Japan would need 1,520 transports of more than 5,000 tons each. She happens to possess thirty-two! And what of the fleet, the cruisers, the dread-

noughts, the submarines, and the Zeppelins that would be needed to convoy such a fleet of transports to our shores.*

Dismissing these absurdities we come to the fear that unless a restriction is imposed upon Asiatic immigration we shall be overwhelmed by cheap labor, the standard of living will be lowered, and the very form of our civilisation changed.

Considering that we are here because we blotted out the red men we will not press the question as to the right of any people to pre-empt a part of the earth's surface to the exclusion of all others. We will simply accept as a fact the elementary proposition that a nation claims the right and power to determine for itself the number of persons it will admit to citizenship, the conditions under which it will admit them, and, in a word, the character of its own civilisation. For good reason the United States has decided that it is unable to receive the conceivably possible hosts of Asiatics who might seek the hospitality of this country. With this view Japan must sympathise.

We have not yet shown ourselves able to cope successfully with the race issues already presented to us. We have the Negro question. The curse of slavery is not wholly blotted out. Some effects re-

*Taken from "The American-Japanese Problem," by Sidney L. Gulick.

main. In the providence of God it has been ordained that no man can put a chain round his brother's ankle without finding sooner or later the other end of the chain round his own neck. Negro slavery was not originally sought by the American people. It was forced upon the Southland. Later the South acquiesced in its existence and sought to maintain it. South and North have made, are making, will continue to make, heroic and splendid efforts to meet in a spirit of righteousness all the difficulties which the past has handed down to the present. But there it is: the adjustment is not yet made. There are problems to solve; there are questions to answer; there are difficulties to be met; there are wrongs to put right. And we may be forgiven if we say that we do not want another race question thrust upon us. I am not suggesting that there is no difference between Africans brought here as slaves and Asiatics coming here as free immigrants. There is a difference. But the fact remains that the one constitutes for us a difficulty great enough. We do not want another.

Yet we have another. We have many others. There are masses of unassimilated foreigners amongst us, and these, unless we are both wise and lucky, may indeed lower the standard of American living. Three or four times lately I have quoted to you a striking work, "The Old World in the New," by Prof. Ross of the University of Wisconsin. If I could persuade every man and woman amongst you to read it I am

certain that you would rise from your study with a solemn sense of the vastness, even of the terror, of this matter of the unassimilated alien. Let me leave out the name of the particular nationality referred to so as not to arouse any feeling and quote to you Dr. Ross' description of a typical colony:

"The core of the large settlement is likely to be a rancid bit of the Old World. Clerical domination to a degree not tolerated among other Roman Catholics, a stately church overlooking mean farm-houses, numerous church holidays, a tiny public school, built wholly out of State grant, with a sister in the garb of her order as schoolmistress, a big parish school, using only their own language and teaching chiefly the catechism, a high illiteracy and a dense ignorance among lads born on American soil, crimes of violence rather than crimes of cunning, horror of water applied inside or outside, aversion to fresh air, barefoot women at work in the fields, with wretched housekeeping as the natural result, saloons patronised by both sexes, the priest frequently urging his flock 'to have as many children as God will give them,' much reluctant motherhood, early death from excessive child-bearing, large families brought up by the third, fourth, or fifth wife, harsh discipline of children, political apathy, a controlled vote, and an open contempt for Americans and their principles."

There are two millions of these people in America and they are still coming. When I was in New York General Bingham, the Commissioner of Police, said that in that city there were not fewer than three thousand desperadoes from another European coun-

try; mediæval criminals, he called them, who must be dealt with under the forms of American law. And for a thousand facts to give us pause we must turn to the pages of Dr. Ross.

Everybody knows that the streams of immigrant blood have brought health and wealth to the American body politic. Everybody knows that they have brought disease and poverty as well. Immigration is both an asset and a menace. And you know how wonderfully, with what incredible success, America does receive the millions from the Old World, how she makes Americans of them, and how they become a part of—an integral and infinitely valuable part of—the American stock. But you know just as well that the success is not complete. The task is so gigantic that it may strain all American resources of nerve and brain, American institutions, and the American love of liberty. Put it at the best, be as optimistic as you will, say that America is not going to fail in this task of assimilating the millions from the Old World—at least you will admit that America has just about as much as she can do! It is admitted that the task which we have already set ourselves is gigantic; it is not for the good of the human race that we should deliberately make it impossible, that American institutions and American civilisation should be overwhelmed and destroyed. With this view, I repeat, Japan must sympathise.

And Japan does sympathise with us. Japan un-

derstands. What is called the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907, by which Japan herself undertakes to prohibit the emigration of laborers from her country to American shores, has been faithfully observed by her. Japan has not violated the agreement. And Japan has no intention of violating it. That which hurts Japan is what I have called the policy of pin pricks. We are practising a discrimination which wounds her sensitive pride and assails her honor. Make your laws equal in their treatment of alien races, so that what applies to one country will apply to another, and there will be no ground of offence. Japan says in effect,—“You have a perfect right to make your own decisions and to fortify those decisions by law. Only, do not single us out for treatment to which you do not subject other nations. Treat us as you treat others; and then, whatever the treatment may be, you will hear from us no complaint.”

Has not the time come for us to take a wide view, comprehensive, statesmanlike, a new view of all these questions of immigration, and of all questions of policy related to immigration, actual or possible? I suggest to you that the time has come when we might substitute a world-view and an American policy for hand to mouth arrangements and rule of thumb legislation. Is it not possible to meet every difficulty with a policy which shall be satisfactory to the best mind of America, from the mind represented by the

labor union to that represented by the patriot and the cosmopolitan, with world-wide, universal sympathies? I believe it is possible. Looking over the world of Europe as well as the world of Asia, our own Dr. Gulick, one of the most brilliant men of our generation, has outlined "a new policy for America."* In brief, it comes to this:

A new general immigration law which shall restrict immigration to, say, five per cent of the number of persons of that nationality already naturalised here with their children. Five per cent is chosen arbitrarily, and some other proportion might conceivably be as good or better. The idea is that persons from abroad are assimilated and Americanised most successfully in proportion to the number of their own race already here as citizens. Calculation shows that this percentage would reduce the number of those now being received from the south and south-east of Europe. It would allow of larger numbers from the north and northwest of Europe. And it would bring the whole matter within manageable proportions.

As to those nationalities which have no representatives yet naturalised in the United States, a number might again be arbitrarily fixed—500 or for that matter 5,000—each year until an agreed number are with us and have become part of the American stock,

*"The American-Japanese Problem," by Sidney L. Gulick.

when the percentage rule would come into play.

And this, as you see, would involve the admission of Japanese to citizenship. But in how small numbers! In numbers so small as not to affect the body of American life. If I take a cup of water and pour it into the Pacific Ocean, as a matter of actual fact, there is more water in the ocean than there was before. To all intents and purposes there is not. And the tiny trickling stream of hundreds or even of a few thousands into the great current represented by close upon a hundred millions of human beings would be infinitesimal, unrecognisable; there, in fact, yet in its potentialities hardly there at all. But the hurtful, hateful discrimination would be done away and every ground of offence removed.

And now it will be thought that this raises questions of assimilation, intermarriage, intermixture. These cannot be discussed in a single sermon. I content myself with saying that the assertion that the Japanese will not assimilate with us is a statement notoriously untrue, and that everybody who has really studied the question knows it is untrue. While as to intermarriage, the question does not now arise. I have not overlooked it, and if it were necessary I should be prepared to discuss it. The essential thing is to broaden out our minds and hearts, rid ourselves of sectarian and provincial narrowness, and seek to harmonise our practices with our professions of universal brotherhood:—in a word, to show ourselves good Americans and good Christians.

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Then I come to America's reply to Japan. What should it be? I have no authority to speak for anybody but myself, but I have a right to speak my own convictions. I am under no obligation to say to you the things that you would like to hear. But then, neither are you under any obligation to agree with me. I am only under bonds to say nothing to you carelessly, frivolously. I must speak with a due sense of responsibility, and you have a perfect right to repudiate my views if they seem to you unsound. This is the reply which in my judgment America should make to Japan:

We recognise your splendid ability, your marvellous and mighty achievements. Your valor proved on land and sea attests a race of heroes. Your victories in the arts of civilisation, in literature, in commerce, in the pursuits of peace reveal your genius.

We condemn insolent assertions of race superiority. We refuse to discuss questions of superiority and inferiority, of higher and lower. God has made of one every nation to dwell on all the face of the earth. You with us are the Father's children.

We recognise your mission as harmoniser of East and West. You have to interpret the one to the other. We have taken our law from Rome, our art from Greece, our religion from the Jew. The English have been the colonisers. God has called America to teach liberty to mankind. And it may be that our Father in heaven has called Japan to harmonise eastern and

western civilisations to the end of the unification of the world.

We sincerely desire your friendship. Our professions are not mere words. We accept your professions of friendship at their face value. We believe you mean what you say. We mean what we say. We wish to live in amity with you. We wish to strive with you only in the healthy rivalries of peace and to be friends with you on land and sea.

We condemn their insulting policies of short-sighted and selfish politics. We have ourselves no part in them. We believe that they are mistaken where they are not vicious and vicious where they are not mistaken.

We declare that it is our intention to oppose these policies everywhere, and to do all that lies in our power to defeat them. We have good reason at the present moment for believing that a check has been placed upon these sinister movements and that you are likely to hear less of them in the coming days. We have reason for saying that a better spirit is obtaining and wiser counsel prevailing.

And we publicly pledge ourselves, now and in the coming years, to seek to influence our fellow citizens, the men and women of the United States, to the end that all racial antagonism shall be done away, and that America at least shall live as befits a people who proclaim the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.